

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Summary Information on Sustainable Development Challenge Grant Projects
Selected for Funding for FY 1996
Updated June 1999

Sustainable Neighborhood Design for the Desert Southwest (Arizona) 96-09-AZ-0175-B Explores planning options for new neighborhood developments in Phoenix and Scottsdale that are sensitive to the natural environment, ensuring quality of life for residents, minimize users of resources, and promote economic growth. Working teams of municipal leaders and stakeholders will be established to develop implementable guidelines and model designs for sustainability. The results are to be applied locally and shared regionally with other southwestern desert communities facing competing development and sustainability pressures. See website <http://www.asu.edu/caed/Sustainability>.

Building Materials Exchange in New Orleans (Louisiana) 96-06-LA-0365-B Established a program to collect waste building materials from the construction industry in inner-city housing projects. This program will provide individuals and neighborhood nonprofit organizations with a lower cost alternative for materials and an understanding of how these materials can be used for urban renewal. It will help address regional concern over limited landfill capacity.

This grant was awarded to the New Orleans Building Materials Exchange (NOBME) in December 1996, for \$72,070. Activities undertaken so far include the hiring of staff, purchase of a truck and computer, acquisition of alternative storage space, and discussions which focused the working relationship with Habitat for Humanity, the Exchange's partner in the project.

A New Orleans local news reporter, Margaret Orr, from NBC local news channel aired a story on NOBME in October 1996. Margaret Orr also aired a story on the worm composting colony being established by the Mid-City Green Project, Inc. which was used in an education/school outreach presentation in March. The video is available from Region 6. Mid-City Green was named the winner of Renew America's National Environmental Award on January 22, 1997. A feature article was done in the Living Magazine of the New Orleans Times-Picayune on April 11, 1997.

EcoPark Development in Omaha (Nebraska) 96-07-NE-0507-B Allows work to begin on development of an inner-city ecological park based on revitalization of an existing site. Participants will investigate potential sites, financing options, and environmentally-friendly design features, particularly use of recycled construction materials, for construction of a commercial office to house a resource conservation center, community, and service organizations as well as local businesses. The building will be surrounded by an ecological park to demonstrate use of native plantings, locally-generated compost material, and other organic landscaping techniques. The project will promote and expand use of recycled materials in the design of commercial space, help create economic opportunity in a poor, inner-city neighborhood, and build a stronger working relationship between community residents, local businesses, and the local government.

The Nebraska State Recycling Association was awarded \$75,000. for this project. An open house was held by the grantee in recognition of the grant award, which was well attended by local officials. The EPA Region 7 project officer is Susan Klein, who can be contacted at 913-551-7786.

Sustaining Forestry in New Hampshire (New Hampshire) 96-01-NH-0624-A Promotes better forestry management practices protecting water quality and the future of the region's timber industry. A handbook of sustainable practices has been developed and shared with local landowners and foresters to promote improved management. The Forest Sustainable Standards Work Team is a 22-member group that guided this activity.

This grant was awarded to the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests in January 1997, for \$26,000, and since then the voluntary measures manual has been developed and distributed and is being broadly used. The EPA Region 1 project officer is Mark Kern, who can be contacted at 617-918-1589.

Sustainable Craft Industry in Appalachia (North Carolina) 96-04-NC-0129-A Demonstrates how native grasses can be grown to create a source of materials for a growing and lucrative regional industry - handmade crafts. The

North Carolina Arboretum and its partners will research and develop a prototype natural hand-woven basketry as a sustainable economic activity. Emphasis will be placed on investigating production techniques to protect the land and water, such as siting gardens along riparian areas to reduce polluted runoff and increase natural buffering capacity, cutting pesticide and fertilizer use to protect water quality, and selecting plants that allow artists to reduce their reliance on artificial chemical dyes.

The grant was awarded to the University of North Carolina Arboretum for \$50,000. The EPA Region 4 project officer is Annette N. Hill, who can be reached at 404-562-8287.

Community Supported Agriculture in the Mid-Atlantic Region (Pennsylvania) 96-03-PA-0609-A

Established a network of 26 organic farms to grow on a contract basis for local urban residents in the mid-Atlantic region. While helping to provide people with a pesticide-free food supply, the emphasis on organic farming also helps improve water quality - agricultural runoff accounts for 40% of the nitrogen in Chesapeake Bay. The arrangement also helps save agricultural land from development in a region where more than 1,000 farms are being sold every year.

This grant was awarded to Wilson College in February 1997, for \$48,000. Activities undertaken include the hiring of a project coordinator and meetings with key organizations to select the specific farms for the program. The EPA Region 3 project officer is Theresa Martella, who can be reached at 215-566-5423.

Implementing a Strategic Plan for Sustainable Development in South Carolina (South Carolina)

96-04-SC-0021-A Empowers officials and residents in one of the country's largest remaining undeveloped wetland ecosystems to begin implementing their strategic plan which will simultaneously protect and capitalize upon its most important - asset. The project will involve: 1) developing performance standards to guide development; 2) conducting market feasibility assessments to determine the commercial value associated with fisheries, forest products, and eco-tourism; and 3) developing educational programs to increase the public's understanding of the area's unique environmental and cultural features.

This grant was awarded to the Colleton County (South Carolina) Research Development Board in the amount of \$42,000. The EPA Region 4 project officer is Annette N. Hill, who can be reached 404-562-8287.

Preserving Sustainability in Central Virginia (Virginia) 96-03 VA-0058-A Advances a regional bottoms-up process for better managing the rapid sprawling development around Charlottesville, Virginia. Six local governments along with public and private interests will join together to secure written agreements on actions to be taken to carry out the community's vision of a sustainable future, and to prepare a State of the Region report outlining the area's most significant challenges and opportunities for improving local conditions.

This grant was awarded in February 1997 to the Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission in the amount of \$20,000. The EPA Region 3 project officer is Theresa Martella, who can be contacted at 215-566-5423.

Marketing the Economic Benefits of Sustainable Development in the Rappahannock River Watershed (Virginia) 96-03-VA-0151-A Unites five local governments with private developers and conservation groups to identify, use and evaluate alternative practices for reducing development impacts. These practices, designed to reduce ecological damage and encourage more efficient land use developments patterns, will be marketed aggressively throughout the watershed and made available to other communities concerned about the adverse ecological, economic, and social impacts of poorly managed development.

This grant was awarded in March 1997 to the Friends of the Rappahannock, Inc. in the amount of \$20,000. The EPA Region 3 project officer is Mindy Lemoine, who can be contacted at 215-566-2736.

Washington Smart Wood Certification Program (Washington) 96-10-WA-0315-B Establishes a State wood products certification program to recognize and reward timber production in the marketplace. Using market forces as an alternative to regulation, the project involves defining and promoting those practices that can improve environmental quality while also improving the industry's long-term viability. The project is designed to encourage broad participation by all players in the wood products production chain. Certification is offered to foresters, landowners, mill operators, manufacturers, and retailers.

*This grant was awarded to the Olympic Peninsula Foundation in January 1997, for \$100,000. The award received attention in several newspapers in the Puget Sound/Olympic Peninsula area and the **Seattle Times** covered the announcement in their business section.*